



## MISSOURI SENTENCING ADVISORY COMMISSION



### STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Sentencing Advisory Commission was established in Missouri statutes in 1993 and Senate Bill 5 which passed in 2003 made key changes to the law 558.019(6)(1)(9). The text of the law follows:

6. (1) A sentencing advisory commission is hereby created to consist of eleven members. One member shall be appointed by the speaker of the house. One member shall be appointed by the president pro tem of the senate. One member shall be the director of the department of corrections. Six members shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor from among the following: the public defender commission; private citizens; a private member of the Missouri Bar; the board of probation and parole; and a prosecutor. Two members shall be appointed by the supreme court, one from a metropolitan area and one from a rural area. All members shall be appointed to a four-year term. All members of the sentencing commission appointed prior to August 28, 1994, shall continue to serve on the sentencing advisory commission at the pleasure of the governor.

(2) The commission shall study sentencing practices in the circuit courts throughout the state for the purpose of determining whether and to what extent disparities exist among the various circuit courts with respect to the length of sentences imposed and the use of probation for offenders convicted of the same or similar crimes and with similar criminal histories. The commission shall also study and examine whether and to what extent sentencing disparity among economic and social classes exists in relation to the sentence of death and if so, the reasons therefor sentences are comparable to other states, if the length of the sentence is appropriate, and the rate of rehabilitation based on sentence. It shall compile statistics, examine cases, draw conclusions, and perform other duties relevant to the research and investigation of disparities in death penalty sentencing among economic and social classes.

(3) The commission shall establish a system of recommended sentences, within the statutory minimum and maximum sentences provided by law for each felony committed under the laws of this state. This system of recommended sentences shall be distributed to all sentencing courts within the state of Missouri. The recommended sentence for each crime shall take into account, but not be limited to, the following factors:

- (a) The nature and severity of each offense;
- (b) The record of prior offenses by the offender;
- (c) The data gathered by the commission showing the duration and nature of sentences imposed for each crime; and
- (d) The resources of the department of corrections and other authorities to carry out the punishments that are imposed.

(4) The commission shall study alternative sentences, prison work programs, work release, home-based incarceration, probation and parole options, and any other programs and report the feasibility of these options in Missouri.

(5) The commission shall publish and distribute its recommendations on or before July 1, 2004. The commission shall study the implementation and use of the recommendations until July 1, 2005, and return a report to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the president pro tem of the senate. Following the July 1, 2005, report, the commission shall revise the recommended sentences every two years.

(6) The governor shall select a chairperson who shall call meetings of the commission as required or permitted pursuant to the purpose of the sentencing commission.

(7) The members of the commission shall not receive compensation for their duties on the commission, but shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of these duties and for which they are not reimbursed by reason of their other paid positions.

(8) The circuit and associate circuit courts of this state, the office of the state courts administrator, the department of public safety, and the department of corrections shall cooperate with the commission by providing information or access to information needed by the commission. The office of the state courts administrator will provide needed staffing resources.

7. Courts shall retain discretion to lower or exceed the sentence recommended by the commission as otherwise allowable by law, and to order restorative justice methods, when applicable.

8. If the imposition or execution of a sentence is suspended, the court may order any or all of the following restorative justice methods, or any other method that the court finds just or appropriate:

- (1) Restitution to any victim or a statutorily created fund for costs incurred as a result of the offender's actions;
- (2) Offender treatment programs;
- (3) Mandatory community service;
- (4) Work release programs in local facilities; and
- (5) Community-based residential and nonresidential programs.

9. The provisions of this section shall apply only to offenses occurring on or after August 28, 2003.

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